## MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
(Formerly Bureau of Health)
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Phone 1-800-821-5821 / Fax 207-287-7443

\*\*ADVISORY - Important Information \*\*

## YYYYPHADV022

TO: School-based Health Centers; Maine CDC; Local Health

Departments; Healthcare; Laboratory; MEMA Duty Officers; County EMA; NNEPCC; PHN; EMA: RRC; State and Federal

**Agencies** 

**FROM:** Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: Shiga-toxin positive E. coli O157:H7 (STEC) cluster – May 28, 2009

**DATE:** May 28, 2009

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**PRIORITY: High** 

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Shiga-toxin positive E. coli O157:H7 (STEC) cluster – May 28, 2009

## **Background:**

Maine CDC is investigating a cluster of 7 shiga toxin positive E.coli O157:H7 (STEC) cases in Cumberland and York counties that occurred among residents over the past month (case onset dates of April 17 to May 17). This is double the usual number of STEC cases reported this time of year (n=3). The median age of cases was 26 years (age range 14 years to 65 years). As of May 28, 6 of the 7 cases have been confirmed shiga positive E. coli O157:H7 by the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL). Of these, 4 cases match by Pulse-Field Gel Electrophoresis (PFGE) and are considered part of a national cluster. At this time, the investigation is ongoing although we have not identified any common venues, events or foods based on case interviews.

## **Recommendations:**

Maine CDC has enhanced shiga-toxin positive E.coli (STEC) surveillance at this time. Practitioners seeing patients with symptoms of sustained and/or bloody diarrhea should collect stool specimens for bacterial culture and shiga-toxin testing. Suspected or confirmed cases should be reported to the Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821. All positive specimens should be forwarded to HETL for confirmatory testing.

**For More Information:** Information and recommendations on E. coli O157:H7 may be accessed at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/">http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/</a>.